

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
Washington, April 15, 1847.

Sir: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your excellency's note, of the 22d February last, in answer to mine of the 11th January, proposing, on the part of the President of the United States, immediately to dispatch either to the Havana or Jalapa, as the Mexican Government may prefer, one or more of our most distinguished citizens, as commissioners, clothed with full powers to conclude a treaty of peace with similar commissioners on the part of Mexico, as soon as she shall be officially informed that the Mexican government will appoint such commissioners.

The President deeply regrets the refusal of the Mexican government to accede to the

The President has instructed me to inform you that this "preliminary condition" is wholly inadmissible. Such a condition is neither required by the honor, nor sanctioned by the practice of nations. If it were, this would tend to prolong wars, especially between contiguous countries, until the one or the other power was entirely subdued. No nation which, at the expenditure of blood and treasure, has invaded its enemy's country, and acquired possession of any considerable

of his territory, could ever consent to withdraw its forces, as a preliminary condition to the opening of negotiations for peace. This would be at once to abandon all the advantages it had obtained in the prosecution of the war, without any certainty that peace would result from the sacrifice. Nay more: should such a negotiation prove unsuccessful, the nation which had thus imprudently withdrawn its forces from the enemy's territory, might not be able to recover, without a cost of blood and treasure equal to that first expended, the advantageous position which it had voluntarily abandoned.

Fortunately for the cause of peace and humanity, the history of nations is not

no sanction to such a preliminary condition. The United States are as jealous of their national honor as any power on the face of the earth; and yet it never entered into the contemplation of the great statesmen who administered our government during the period of our last war with Great Britain, to insist that the latter should relinquish that part of our territory of which she was in actual possession, before they would consent to open negotiations for peace. On the contrary, they took the initiative, and appointed commissioners to treat for peace whilst portions of our country were held by the enemy; and it is a remarkable fact, that the treaty of Ghent was

concluded by the plenipotentiaries of the two powers whilst the war was raging on both sides; and the most memorable of the conflicts to which it gave rise took place upon our soil after the negotiators had happily terminated their labors. History is full of such examples. Indeed, so far as the undersigned is aware, there is not to be found, at least in modern times, a single case, except the present, in which it has been considered a necessary preliminary that an invading army should be withdrawn before negotiations for peace could commence between the parties to the war.

It would also, be difficult to find a precedent for the course pursued by the Mexican

government in another particular. The President, anxious to avoid the war now existing, sent a minister of peace to Mexico for that purpose. After the Mexican forces had attacked the army of Gen. Taylor on this side of the Rio Grande, and thus commenced the war, the President, actuated by the same pacific spirit, made repeated overtures to the government of Mexico to negotiate for its termination; and although he has, from the beginning, solemnly declared before the world that he desired no terms but such as were just and honorable for both parties, yet the Mexican government, by refusing to receive our minister in the first place, and afterwards by not acceding to our overtures, has opened

ment even the opportunity of making known the terms on which we would be willing to settle all questions in dispute between the two republics. The war can never end while Mexico refuses even to hear the proposals which we have always been ready to make for peace.

Thd President will not again renew the offer to negotiate—at least until he shall have reason to believe that it would be accepted by the Mexican government. Devoted, however, to honorable peace, he is determined that the evils of the war shall not be protracted one day longer than shall be rendered absolutely necessary.

lately necessary by the Mexican republic-  
For the purpose of carrying this determina-  
tion into effect with the least possible delay  
he will forthwith send to the headquarters  
the army, in Mexico, Nicholas P. Trist, esq.,  
the officer next in rank to the undersigned  
our Department of Foreign Affairs, as a com-  
missioner, invested with full powers to con-  
clude a definite treaty of peace with the pos-  
sible Mexican States. This gentleman pos-  
sesses the entire confidence of the President, and  
is eminently worthy of that of the Mexican  
government.

The undersigned refrains from all comment  
upon the concluding paragraph, as well

some other portions, of your excellency's no  
because the strong sense which he entertain  
of the importance of the United States

earth  
The  
offer to your  
most distinguished

JAMES BUCHANAN.

[TRANSLATION.]

To his excellency the Secretary of State of the  
United States of America:  
FEDERAL POLICE, June 22, 1847.

The undersigned, Minister of Internal and Foreign Relations had the honor to receive your excellency's note, dated the 15th April, 1911, in which you declare that his excellency the President of the United States intends to despatch, as a commissioner to the headquarters of the army operating in Mexico, Nicholas P. Trist, esq., the officer next in rank to your excellency, with full powers to conclude a definite treaty of peace with the Mexican Government, and the most excellent President *ad interim* of this republic, to whom the undersigned immediately made known the contents of your excellency's said official note, and has determined that you should be informed

in reply, that the decision on the affair is a question being reserved to the sovereign Congress of the nation, your excellency's said note is transmitted by him to that body, in order that it may determine what should be deemed most proper on the subject. Its resolution shall be communicated in due time to your excellency, by the department under the charge of the undersigned, who leaves for that occasion the answer to the points embraced in your excellency's said note.

The undersigned avails himself of this opportunity to offer to your excellency the assurances of his distinguished consideration.

DOMINGO IBARRA.

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